

# JEWISH STUDY NETWORK

## Parshat Tazria-Metzora

### *Revolving Words*

The Hebrew language is most fascinating. Words in Hebrew have a significant aspect in that the very letters that make up words reveal secrets and beautiful ideas. One can rearrange letters from a word and learn deeper lessons as we shall illustrate.

This week's parsha talks about one who is inflicted with tzaras, a spiritual illness that manifests as a type of curable leprosy. The rabbis teach us that one could become a metzora, leper, for speaking evil slander against others. The leper was quarantined and encouraged to spend time in introspection. When he repented, his physical affliction was totally healed. He was then allowed back into the Israelite camp. The sages (Tikuney Zohar 58a) state that the word ,גג"affliction" can be rearranged to spell ,גג"pleasure". What is being said here? Hashem created the world to give man pleasure! Is this true?! Yes, the ultimate pleasure one can achieve is in Olam HaBah, the World to Come. However, this world is meant to stimulate the nerve endings in a positive manner in order to be used to grow in spirituality as well. This is done by enjoying the pleasures of the world in their correct parameters and by recognizing that they come from God.

The leper sinned and spoke Lashon Harah, evil slander. He showed a disregard for treating others and did not use God's world properly. Since his priorities are off, God sent him tzaras, a ,גג"affliction," in order to wake him up and allow him to fix his actions and achieve ,גג"pleasure and enjoyment"! God wants man to enjoy life and sometimes He punishes us to help get us back on track. This is why the two words of 'punishment' and 'pleasure' are formed by the same Hebrew letters. In life we would benefit by asking ourselves: Is this action going to bring me ultimate pleasure or regrettable affliction? This may be one hint behind the revolving letters.

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In fact, the sages shared numerous other examples found in common words. Below is a sampling mostly drawn from the words of Ramchal (especially in Sefer Tefillos).

1- *נוי* - *יוון* - *נוי*: *The Greeks (יוון) stressed the worship of the physical body (נוי, beauty).*

2- *נוס* - *זמן* - *נוס*: *The Seforim write that time passes as a spiral. Throughout the year we do not just commemorate a Jewish Holiday, we so to speak go through it again; re-live it. Hence, ,זמןtime, is like a ,נוסround ring.*

3- *נוח* - *חן* - *נוח*: *Noach (נוח) found favor (חן) in the eyes of Hashem!*

4- *עד* - *עד* - *עד*: *A witness (עד) must know (עד) precisely what happened.*

5- *אדם* - *מאד* - *אדם*: *Man (אדם) has the ability to accomplish great heights, he is limitless (מאד) in his greatness! See Bereishis Rabbah (9:12).*

6- *חבר* - *חבר* - *חבר*: *The Shlah writes that one must assure that his acquaintances are true friends (חבר) and not God-forbid, swords (חרב) dragging him down.*

7- *תשובה* - *הבושת* - *תשובה*: *True repentance (תשובה) comes from embarrassment / humility (הבושת) before Hashem.*

The Torah contains amazing lessons for us to learn from!

## *Shabbat Shalom!*

